



alpha

shaped around you

Domestic Abuse Policy

Author	Heather Howard
SLT (Senior Leadership Team) Lead	Peter Merity
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Registered Office: Alpha (RSL) Ltd trading as Alpha
Management Office, Poppyfields, Woodpecker Close, Upton, Wirral, CH49 4AA
e: enquiries@alpha-living.co.uk t: 0330 460 9870 w: alpha-living.co.uk

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1. Introduction

This policy sets out how Alpha Living views domestic abuse, and how we will respond to and seek to deal with any reports of such abuse affecting residents, household members and any of our colleagues who may be experiencing domestic abuse.

Alpha Living believes that domestic abuse presents one of the highest risks to personal safety and is totally unacceptable and will therefore take the strongest action possible against perpetrators of domestic abuse where it has the power to do so and with the consent of the victim.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Alpha Living has an accountable process to identify, record and put in place procedures to deal with those residents that experience domestic abuse.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all our residents and colleagues.

4. Policy Objectives

The objectives of our policy are to:

- Improve overall safety and wellbeing by recognising that domestic abuse is a serious crime which has an adverse impact on the health of individuals, families, and communities
- Increase awareness and understanding of this issue amongst residents and colleagues
- Encourage residents and colleagues to report domestic abuse
- Facilitate early identification of domestic abuse and offer supportive and effective intervention to reduce the risk of harm
- Improve the safety and welfare of residents affected by domestic abuse and prevent further incidents by responding quickly, effectively, and consistently to all reports
- Empower victims by providing information on the options available to them
- Create a consistent approach for recording and monitoring incidents of domestic abuse
- Inform colleagues of best practice when responding to reports of domestic abuse
- Ensure all colleagues are clear regarding their roles in tackling and responding to issues around domestic abuse

Definition of Domestic Abuse

In England and Wales, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse as ‘a single incident or course of conduct between those who are aged 16 years or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members.’

Domestic abuse consists of: physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic, psychological, emotional, or other abuse.

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten someone.

5. Policy Framework

Alpha Living encourages all residents to report domestic abuse, whether they are victims of, or witness to, such incidents. We will deal with all reports of domestic abuse with sensitivity.

As part of our arrangements to address domestic abuse we will:

- Publicise this policy to all residents and colleagues through our website and ensure the policy is easily accessible to all our residents within our developments.
- Provide advice and information via our Customer Experience team and Area Managers.

Survivor-centred approach - Alpha Living will adopt a ‘survivor-centred’ approach in dealing with domestic abuse i.e. if a person feels they are experiencing domestic abuse we will deal with it under this policy, in a non-judgemental manner and in confidence.

We will help our residents to obtain advice from a domestic abuse specialist and wherever possible we will offer the option of being interviewed by an officer of the gender requested.

We will not require those subject to domestic abuse to take legal action before we provide assistance. We will work with the victim to review their current housing situation, to assess the level of support required and to take action against the perpetrator that the victim feels is most appropriate.

In working with those experiencing domestic abuse, we will not interview perpetrators for their account of events as we would for other types of anti-social behaviour.

We will take the strongest action possible against perpetrators of domestic abuse, whilst respecting the wishes of the victim.

Where a resident does not feel safe to remain in their home, we will assist the resident to access emergency accommodation either through the Local Authority or a refuge. Alpha Living does not own any emergency accommodation, however if available and appropriate we will assist with a temporary or permanent transfer as a priority.

Should the resident wish to remain in their home, we will work with the resident and statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure that it is safe to do so; this may include additional security and target hardening measures. Where damage has been caused to the property by the perpetrator, we will not usually seek to recover the costs of this damage from the victim.

6. Legislation

The policy has been written with reference to relevant legislation and guidance, including:

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Care Act 2014
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Make a Stand Campaign

7. Responsibility

We will ensure this policy is successful, with colleagues having individual and collective responsibility to implement the policy.

Consultation

The following consultation will be carried out in the formation of this policy.

- Senior Leadership Team
- Resident Policy Review Group
- All colleagues responsible for the welfare of our residents

8. Equality, diversity, and inclusion

We appreciate that domestic abuse may receive less recognition amongst groups, religions, and cultures and is more prevalent against women, however we will treat all reports of domestic abuse with equal severity. We will ensure we raise awareness of domestic abuse issues and our approach with customers of all backgrounds and ensure they are comfortable and empowered to report and discuss incidents.

Alpha Living believes that all people should be treated with dignity and respect regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including, nationality, ethnic or national origins), religion, belief or non-belief, sex, or sexuality or by association with someone with any of these characteristics or perception of having any of these characteristics and is committed to promoting diverse and happy neighbourhoods. All reasonable assistance and adjustments will be provided.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken to ensure issues of diversity and inclusion have been taken into consideration when making decisions that could have disproportionate impacts on individuals or groups protected under the Equality Act 2010.

9. Monitoring, review, and evaluation

Incidents of reported cases will be reviewed by the Safeguarding Lead to ensure appropriate actions have been taken.

This policy will be reviewed every two years with any changes approved through our governance process, as necessary. The review will take account of:

- changes to statutory/regulatory guidance and developing good practice
- any learning identified because of case reviews